A long-winded labour of love

ROGER GLOVER 'Elements' (Polydor 3177 306)***

IF I ASKED you which of the five members of Deep Purple Mk. II you reckoned had had the most success since the split, you'd probably say Ritchie Blackmore — and you'd be right.

But who would you place after Rainbow's Man In Black? Vocalist Ian Gillan perhaps, who's had his own band for some time now, has recorded albums for Island records, but who admittedly has hardly managed to set the world on fire? Or maybe drummer Ian Paice and keyboards player Jon Lord, whose PAL venture, equally, failed to turn the rockbiz inside out? Then again, how about bassist Roger Glover — or would you say that, because of his apparent inactivity, he isn't really worth considering?

Well, personally speaking, I wouldn't hesitate to put Glover second down on the list — since Purple's demise his contributions to the music world have like as not exceeded all the other members' put together. Indirectly, that is — see, while the other guys have concentrated on forming their own bands and recording their own albums, Glover has made a name for himself in the record producing field, sitting in at the boards for a whole host of artists, from Judas Priest to Barbie Benton, would you believe.

'Elements' therefore represents Glover's premier endeavour in the solo artist stakes. Because of production commitments, it's taken him a goodly time, something like two years, to complete the album — a labour of love, no doubt about it, but sadly *not* a resounding success, at least as far as this particular reviewer is concerned.

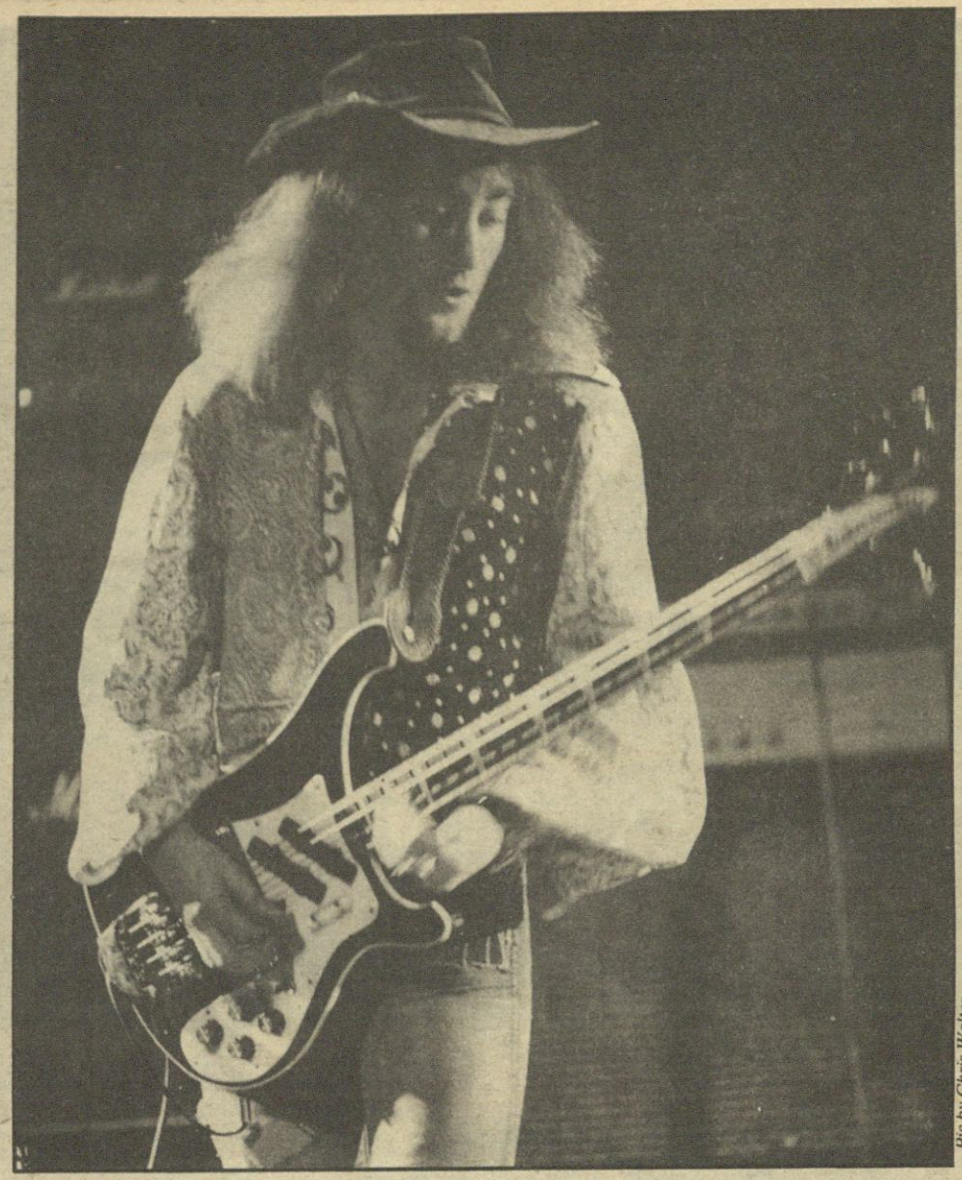
For this LP, Glover has chosen to follow an orchestral-rock direction. While it's fairly accessible and easy to listen to (which isn't to say that you can categorise it under 'easy listening') and therefore superior to some of Jon Lord's similar work, i.e. 'Sarabande', overall it lacks cohesion and direction — this despite the fairly concrete concept of earth, fire, wind and water: four 'Elements'.

'The First Ring Made Of Clay' kicks off the proceedings in eventful fashion however, distant Tangs-like dronings leading quickly into full-blown orchestration — altogether stirring stuff, but from here on in matters steadily slide downhill I'm afraid. 'Next A Ring Of Fire', which concludes side one, plods rather, being neither as grandiose nor as strong hook-wise as its predecessor; similarly 'The Third Ring's Watery Flow' and 'The Fourth Ring's With The Wind', the two tracks that take up most of side two, contain very little to make you sit up and take notice. The former is reminiscent of Bo Hansson, which is no good thing, and the latter's recurring Indian sitar/percussive central theme goes on and on ad infinitum with very few changes apart from some vocal/instrumental embellishments.

On the plus side is Simon Phillips' superlative work on drums — indeed, his playing goes a long way towards earning the album its three star status — also Glover's fondness of deep, bassy sounds, which gives the LP a lot of backbone.

It's a commendable, proficient all-round effort, but no 'Tubular Bells' or anything.

GEOFF BARTON



Pic by Chris Walter

ROGER GLOVER: seen here in his days as Deep Purple bass player

BLUE NOTES 'In Concert' (Ogun OG 220)****

WHEN THEY came to Europe from South Africa in the mid-Sixties, the Blue Notes brought with them a hitherto unknown slant of African jazz culture. The four Blue Notes now remaining are well known as individuals in the contemporary/improvisational field, but are rarely together as one band. This album was recorded at a 100 Club gig last year.

Compared to their previous 'Blue Notes For Mongezi', 'In Concert' is a steadier, more ordered if not so emotive album. Most of the material, running in a continuous sequence, is based on African folk song, with the heady corporate chanting and droning piano of 'Mhegebe' outstanding. Playing as always is supreme with Louis Moholo's light nervy drumming the backdrop to Dudu Pukwana's scowling alto.

A very successful album that says a lot without drowning out the listener.

LINNET EVANS

PETER BROWN 'Do Ya Wanna Get Funky With Me?' (TK TKR 82514)*

I'M ALL for multi-instrumentalists making their 'statement' when they've something to say. Peter Brown hasn't.

His track record to date consists of the ultra-ordinary album title, which as a 12 inch single shook a million trussed booties in discoland. That it borrowed heavily from Philly folk like People's Choice clearly was no concern.

Now we've a whole half hour's worth of Brown's mixture. It's dire. Picture a funky Womble and you've some idea of the general drift. Pete phrases in an annoying milk'n'water fashion, messing about on synths, drums and things. What really raises this critic's bile is that Betty Wright — that peach of soul princesses — sings *background* on a couple of tracks. That sums up TK in the UK.

PAUL McCREA